

Legislative News



December 12, 2008
Issue 2

Higher Education Legislative Highlights: Pre-filed Bills

[SB 15](#) Authorizes the Governor to convey state property in Jasper County to Missouri Southern State University.

[SB 23](#) Designates that the gaming revenues derived from the repeal of the loss limits will be used for higher education tuition reduction.

[SB 29](#) Requires all diesel fuel sold at retail in Missouri after a certain date to be a biodiesel blended fuel. The Department of Agriculture may annually contract with the Food & Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri to study the effect of biodiesel and fuel ethanol production on the prices of fuel and food.

[SB 40](#) Modifies provisions of the Bright Flight Scholarship Program.

[SB 64](#) Modifies provisions relating to charter schools.

[SB 78](#) Creates the Missouri Senior Cadet Program for mentoring of kindergarten through eighth grade students. If a student mentor attends a public college or university located in Missouri after participating in the program, the state will provide a reimbursement in the amount of three credit hours per semester for up to four years.

[SB 107](#) Creates an income tax deduction for higher education expenses.

Preparation of “Cut Scenario” Memos Ongoing

Leaders of the House and Senate have asked all state agencies – including public institutions of higher education – to prepare memoranda summarizing the impact of cure budget cuts of 15%, 20%, and 25%. The MDHE is collecting information provided by higher education institutions and will transmit it to the legislature along with a document that captures the state-wide impact of the cuts on public higher education.

This week, Commissioner Stein and Deputy Commissioner Paul Wagner provided additional guidance about what information is being sought.

Commissioner Stein asked each institution to prepare scenarios at each cut level, with and without tuition increases (at the rate permitted by the Higher Education Student Funding Act). The MDHE's goal is to show the connection between budget cuts and tuition increases.



Deputy Commissioner Wagner informed institutions that, for purposes of the cut scenario exercise, they can assume that inflation for 2008 will be 3%. He noted, however, that this figure is an estimate only and that the actual 2008 inflation will not be known until mid-January.

MDHE staff has reviewed early drafts of several institutions' memos. Most compelling are memos that detail cost containment measures imposed in recent years.

Senator Nodler Captures the Mood

This week in Jefferson City, the Senate Appropriations Committee received testimony from members of the general public about state funding issues. Committee chair Gary Nodler opened the hearing with a brief rundown of the state's difficult economic position. In addition, he shared three quotations that captured the mood:

“There's nothing you can do that can't be done.”
- *The Beatles*

“Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

- *Sherlock Holmes*

“Well, I guess he plans to get it from them who got it.”
- *Will Rogers, commenting on how FDR would pay for the New Deal*

How SB 40 Would Impact the Bright Flight Program



[Senator Scott Rupp](#) (R-Wentzville) has sponsored [SB 40](#), which would change the Bright Flight program in several ways. The most significant change would extend the period that students who enter the military after high school (rather than going to college) can defer their award. Under the current law, such students can only defer their Bright Flight awards for 27 months. SB 40 extends that period indefinitely, provided that recipients are full-time students within six months after they first cease military service.

The bill also includes language that would provide clarification on the administration of the program, but would not change the way the program operates, including:

- Streamlining the way the statute is written. In the current statute, award amounts and student eligibility are

condensed into one long sentence – which is 547 words long. This structure makes the statute difficult to interpret.

- Clarifying the timeline on which the cut score is determined.
- Clarifying that students who complete home school programs or earn GEDs are eligible for the award.
- Currently, the statute provides for two tiers of awards starting in the 2010-2011 academic year: \$3,000 for students in the top 3% of Missouri test-takers and \$1,000 for students in the top 5%. This bill would make it clear that students in the top 3% will receive \$3,000 because they are in the top 3% and \$1,000 because they are also in the top 5%.

Inaugural Festivities to Include Pot-Luck Picnic Dinner

Considering the current state of the economy, Governor-elect Jay Nixon is planning a modest inaugural dinner this January. Nixon announced this week that the inaugural celebration will include a pot-luck picnic at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. Burgers and traditional picnic fair will be provided; guests are encouraged to bring a dessert.

Other events on January 12 include the swearing-in, a meet and greet, and the Grand March and Inaugural Ball. All inaugural festivities are open to the public. For an updated schedule of events or to request a printed invitation to the festivities, visit the Gov.-elect's [website](#).

2009 Calendar Legislative Events & Other Important Dates

Dec. 2:	Prefiled bills published
Jan. 7:	Session begins
Jan. 12:	Gubernatorial Inauguration
Mar. 1:	Deadline to introduce new senate bills
Mar. 12:	Spring break begins upon adjournment
Mar. 23:	Spring break ends; reconvene at 4 pm
Apr. 1:	Deadline to introduce new house bills
Apr. 13:	Easter break
Apr. 14:	Convene at 2 pm
Apr. 15:	(Senate) Last day to report House consent bills from committees
May 8:	Appropriations bills must be Truly Agreed and Finally Passed
May 15:	Session ends at 6 pm

Schedule of Events—Inauguration Day Jan. 12, 2008, Jefferson City

12 noon	Inauguration, south steps of the State Capitol
1:30 – 3:30 pm	Meet and Greet, the Governor's Mansion
1:30 – 5:30 pm	Inaugural pot-luck picnic dinner, Capitol Plaza Hotel
8 pm	Grand March and Inaugural Ball